

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1143

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11264

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT PGOV ET

SUBJECT: AFCC MEETS OPPOSITION

REFS: (A) ADDIS 11236; (B) ADDIS 11180; (C) USDAO 0608SEP74;

(D) ADDIS 11161; (E) USINFO 18/0904Z SEP 74

1. SUMMARY. THE AFCC MUST SOON MAKE A BASIC AND HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT DECISION WHETHER TO SHARE POWER WITH SUCH CIVILIAN GROUPS AS STUDENTS, LABOR UNIONS AND TEACHERS OR WHETHER, AT THE RISK OF SOME POTENTIALLY BLOODY CONFRONTATIONS, TO EXCLUDE SUCH CIVILIAN GROUPS FROM POWER. THE AFCC'S ABILITY TO MAKE THIS DECISION WILL NOT BE FACILITATED BY CURRENT SHARP DIVISIONS OF OPINION WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE AFCC ITSELF. END SUMMARY.

2. DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED REFERENCED MESSAGES, WHICH ARE CONTINUING (SEPTEL), POINT UP GROWING DILEMMA WITH WHICH ETHIOPIAN

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MILITARY AUTHORITIES NOW FACED. THEY HAVE AROUSED WIDESPREAD

EXPECTATIONS AMONG ETHIOPIAN ELITES OF SWIFT DEMOCRATIZATION ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW THE DISMANTLING OF THE ANCIEN REGIME. THEY HAVE ALSO AROUSED SOME EXPECTATION OF NEAR-TERM MATERIAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF ETHIOPIA'S RURAL PEOPLES AS A RESULT OF THEIR REFORM MOVEMENT "IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MASSES." TO DATE, HOWEVER, THESE MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE KEPT CONTROL OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN THEIR OWN HANDS.

3. AS LONG AS THEIR DECISIONS FOCUSED ON THE GRADUAL DISMANTLING OF THE OLD ORDER TO CLEAR THE DECKS FOR REFORMS, THEIR MOVES ENGENDERED WIDESPREAD ELITE APPROVAL AND RURAL SUPPORT, CONSENT OR, AT MINIMUM, PASSIVITY. THIS PROCESS HAS NOW, HOWEVER, LARGELY RUN ITS COURSE. THE PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS AND SUPPORTERS OF EARLIER PRIVILEGE AND GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIA ARE UNDER LOCK AND KEY. THE EMPEROR HAS BEEN DETHRONED AND - - FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST - - AFCC/EMAC HAVE SUBSTITUTED THEMSELVES AS THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND OPENLY ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING THE COUNTRY TO A BETTER DAY.

4. THE INITIAL DECISIONS AND POSITIONS ANNOUNCED BY THESE NEW AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN CONTROVERSIAL. OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, WHICH THEY PROMISED RAPIDLY TO IMPLEMENT, CONTINUE TO BE VOICED ON MANY GROUNDS AND NO ONE HAS YET DARED SAY EITHER THAT THE DRAFT WILL BE AMENDED TO MEET THESE OBJECTIONS OR THAT THE WHOLE PROJECT WILL BE SHELVED. STUDENTS HAVE BEEN TOLD TO HOLD THEMSELVES READY FOR IMMINENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UPCOUNTRY, BUT THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE FORMIDABLE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE NEEDED TO PUT SUCH A PROJECT USEFULLY AND SAFELY INTO EFFECT CAN OR WILL BE CREATED QUICKLY. UNSPECIFIED CUSTOMS LIKELY TO INHIBIT UNSPECIFIED REFORMS HAVE BEEN "SUSPENDED" BY MILITARY FIAT, DEMONSTRATIONS BARRED AND STRIKES PROHIBITED, AROUSING CONCERN IN STUDENT, LABOR AND TRADITIONAL CIRCLES OVER THE ("CHILEAD?") INTENTIONS OF THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES. THEIR FEARS HAVE NOW FOUND EXPRESSION IN CONTINUING DEMONSTRATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS DEMANDING BROADER POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT.

5. IN SHORT, THE AFCC/EMAC MUST SOON MAKE THE MOMENTOUS DECISION OF WHETHER THEY ARE PREPARED TO SHARE THE DECISION-MAKING CONFIDENTIAL

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POWER THEY HAVE APPROPRIATED WITH OUTSIDERS WHO WANT TO BE MORE THAN "ADVISERS", TO BE CONSULTED AT THE PLEASURE OF THE MILITARY, OR WHETHER THEY WILL OPT FOR REPRESSION. TO SHARE POWER WITH THE CIVILIANS IS A PROSPECT WHICH MANY OF THE MILITARY REFORMISTS WOULD CONSIDER VERY DISTASTEFUL, PARTICULARLY AFTER THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH PRIME MINISTERS ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN AND MICHAEL IMRU. SHARING POWER WITH CIVILIANS WOULD ALSO INVOLVE A NUMBER OF COMPLICATED QUESTIONS (HOW? WHICH ONES? TO WHAT

EXTENT? ON WHAT ISSUES?) WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE AFCC ITSELF TO RESOLVE AND MIGHT POSE PROBLEMS ALSO IN THE MAJOR UNITS THE AFCC PURPORTS TO REPRESENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, REFUSAL TO SHARE POWER WITH ANY CIVILIAN GROUPS AT THE PRESENT TIME MIGHT SOON LEAD TO POTENTIALLY BLOODY CONFRONTATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ONE OR MORE OF THESE GROUPS. IT COULD ALSO ESTABLISH A PATTERN WHICH EVENTUALLY MIGHT DEVELOP INTO A MORE OR LESS PERMANENT JUNTA TYPE OF GOVERNMENT.

6. THE AFCC MAY HAVE ALL THE MORE DIFFICULTY IN GRAPPLING WITH THIS ISSUE BECAUSE OF ITS INTERNAL LACK OF UNITY. FRICTION BETWEEN MODERATES AND RADICALS IN THE AFCC IS ONCE MORE SAID TO BE RUNNING HIGH. WITH THE SPOTLIGHT COMES CRITICISM, AND EMAC'S NEW "ERITREAN" CHAIRMAN ("WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS . . .") HAS ALREADY BECOME A TARGET FOR MUCH JEALOUSY AND CRITICISM IN THE AFCC ITSELF, PARTICULARLY SINCE HE WAS APPARENTLY NOT ONE OF THOSE WHO HAD A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE MILITARY REBELLION IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1974.

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